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Cambodia-South Vietnam: Current Situation



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Cambodia - South Vietnam: Enemy forces continue to avoid major combat with allied soldiers operating against their Cambodian base areas, but their casualties are mounting.

So far, contacts in both the "Fishhook" and "Parrot's Beak" areas, where the two large operations are under way, have been sporadic and generally light. Enemy losses of both materiel and personnel have risen over the weekend, however, with many of the casualties resulting from successful allied air strikes. Over 700 enemy dead are reported in the "Fishhook" area after three days of the operations while in the "Parrot's Beak" South Vietnamese forces claim to have killed over 1,500 since 29 April. Allied losses from the two operations have totaled around 100 killed and 700 wounded.

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Within South Vietnam, the Communists are carrying on with their current offensive phase. During the night of 2-3 May, there were at least 87 enemy incidents reported--one of the most active periods since 1 April. The bulk of the actions occurred in the III and IV Corps areas covering the southern half of the country. Two US air installations, including Bien Hoa air base, received mortar or rocket fire. In the delta, rural outposts manned by local security forces were singled out for enemy harassment.

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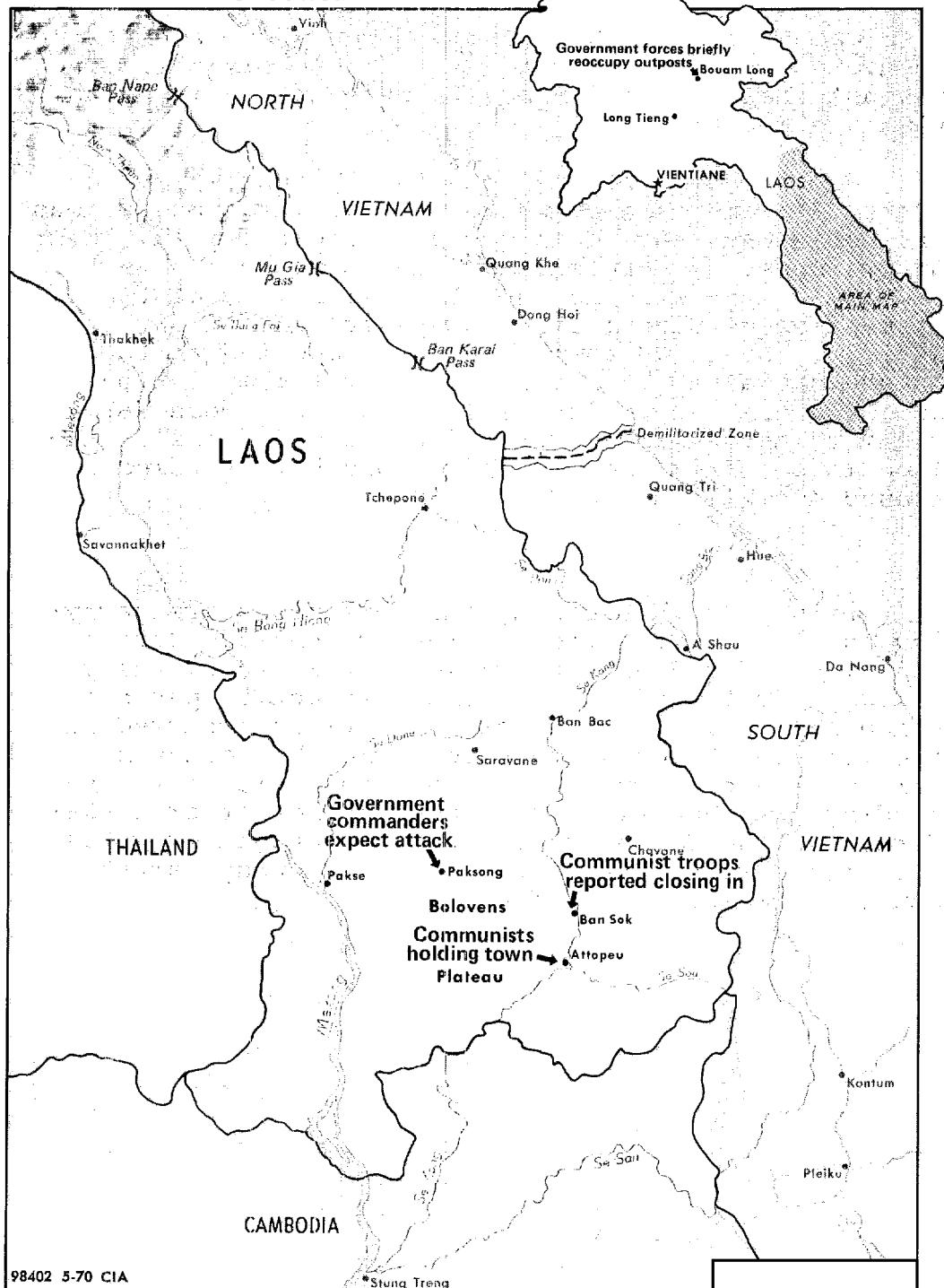
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Laos: Current Situation



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Laos: The Communists are maintaining pressure on government positions near the Bolovens Plateau, although no major new attacks have been reported.

A Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese force overran a small government post near the Se Kong River on 1 May, and Communist troops may also be closing in on the government position at Ban Sok, a few miles to the north. Additional enemy forces have been reported moving onto the Bolovens Plateau, and government troops have been forced from some forward observation posts in an apparent prelude to an attack against three main guerrilla outposts on the plateau. Government commanders are also expecting an attack against the village of Paksong, which lies on the main road from Pakse.

No heavy fighting has taken place in the north during the past two days. Government troops briefly reoccupied two outposts near Bouam Long on 1 May, but enemy mortar fire forced their withdrawal the same day. Aside from minor clashes, the Long Tieng area remains quiet.

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North Vietnam: Hanoi propagandists have reacted sharply to US air action over North Vietnam and allied ground operations in Cambodia.

Various Radio Hanoi broadcasts charged that waves of aircraft--more than 100 both on 1 and 2 May and "many" on 3 May--attacked several populated areas in two provinces of southern North Vietnam.

A Foreign Ministry communiqué issued on 2 May declared that the air strikes were "intolerable... calculated acts" in violation of the US "pledge" in November 1968 to halt all bombing of the North and that they "will seriously affect" the Paris talks. Although threatening no specific retaliatory action, the statement hinted that Hanoi may no longer consider itself under constraints regarding military use of the Demilitarized Zone or attacks on South Vietnamese cities.

Meanwhile, the Vietnamese Communists have begun to denounce the US action in Cambodia with sharp and sometimes vitriolic words, but they have given little indication of what their next move will be. The Communists accuse Washington of open aggression, escalation of the war, and violation of the 1954 Geneva accords, and contend that the US is now committed to seeking a military victory rather than a political settlement.

Aside from leaving an impression that an even deeper freeze in Paris is in store, the rhetoric of the Communists so far suggests that a holding operation is under way. By issuing these hard-hitting but noncommittal statements, Hanoi is able to seize the propaganda advantage as it gains time for its decision-makers to reflect on the new situation and perhaps consult with its allies.

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Czechoslovakia-USSR: Top Soviet leaders are expected in Prague this week to sign a new bilateral friendship treaty.

Brezhnev, making his first trip to Prague since the invasion, will head a delegation that also includes Kosygin, Foreign Minister Gromyko, politburo member Masherov, and the party secretary for relations with ruling Communist parties, Katushev. There are indications that at least two other leaders of the invasion powers--East Germany's Ulbricht and Poland's Gomulka--may also attend the ceremony.

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[redacted] There is speculation that it will serve to sanctify the Brezhnev Doctrine for the first time. Some East Europeans fear that it will include a statement--or perhaps a separate protocol--stressing the need for joint Czechoslovak-Soviet defense of Czechoslovakia's western borders. They are apprehensive that this device could be used in formulating future friendship treaties between the USSR and the other Warsaw Pact countries as a move toward the gradual military integration within the Warsaw Pact that they believe Moscow is seeking. The Czechoslovak-Soviet treaty, in fact, is known to emphasize the "duty of socialist countries to protect socialist achievements." It is unlikely, however, to use explicit language to give permanent status to the Soviet troops "temporarily" stationed in Czechoslovakia.

The accord and the visit by Soviet leaders may well bolster party first secretary Husak's position. The document is said to extol the progress toward "normalization" of relations made by Prague since Husak assumed power in April 1969. This suggests that Brezhnev may give Husak his most demonstrative personal support to date. In economic matters, the treaty is expected to bind Prague even more tightly to the Soviet Union through new bilateral commitments and through increased economic integration within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

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Jordan-Fedayeen: Last weekend's clash between Jordanian troops and commando elements could re-ignite the struggle between the two sides that seriously threatens the Hashemite regime.

An army move to intercept a fedayeen raid into Israel on Saturday sparked a ten-hour battle between commandos and Jordanian troops involving tanks, artillery, and machine guns, according to a fedayeen spokesman. The spokesman said that additional fighting occurred on Sunday, but this has been denied by the Jordanian Army chief. Fedayeen figures list ten wounded in the Saturday fighting.

The Palestine Armed Struggle Command (PASC) has cited the Jordanian Army's action as proof that army leaders are plotting to crush the fedayeen movement. Last week one of the commando groups announced that it had uncovered a plot by the head of the army to assassinate at least two fedayeen leaders. The PASC has called on Jordanian soldiers to resist their commanders and prevent the army from being turned into a force for the protection of enemy settlements and installations.

King Husayn will probably try to stave off a full-scale confrontation between his army and the fedayeen if at all possible, but fighting between the two sides could easily get out of hand. In the event of a real showdown, the loyalty of at least some of the army is uncertain.

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West Germany - East Germany: In a move designed to create a favorable political climate for the coming East - West German meeting at Kassel, Bonn has decided to increase the swing credit from \$104 million to \$120 million in 1970 and 1971. This together with increased postal payments will ease East Germany's strained payments situation by making \$35 million available to satisfy West German creditors. Measures are also to be taken to reduce the imbalance in interzonal trade. The recent removal of certain taxes on East German goods by the West German cabinet will make them cheaper in West Germany, while a six-percent tax to be imposed on West German industrial goods on 1 July will discourage purchases by East Germans.

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Trinidad: The arrest over the weekend of the ringleaders of the recent army mutiny has finally ended the revolt, but Prime Minister Williams has incurred political liabilities that could shake his party's long-time dominance. Williams' personal political stock, upon which his party has been heavily dependent, has undoubtedly dropped as a result of his inability to head off the threat posed by the black power movement or to take early, decisive action against the mutineers. The resignation of one of his chief ministers during the crisis has also tarnished the party's image. As a result, Williams, who has held power since 1956, could face a tough fight in the coming elections, which he will have to call later this year.

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